

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Controversy rising Appointment of conservative Ashcroft a concern for liberals

The battle cry of compassionate conservatism wasn't on the mind of President-elect George W. Bush when he made his most controversial appointment of the cabinet.

His selection of former Missouri senator John Ashcroft for attorney general was not met well by many liberal advocacy groups, as Ashcroft has shown in his long public service career the willingness to adopt a strongly conservative agenda often linked with the religious right groups of America.

The nomination is the first sign of a conservative, Christian lobby trying hard to stake its claim in the Bush administration and keep its claim there for four years.

Ashcroft has a checkered past, if you're a liberal. If you have more conservative leanings, he has a stolid record of values and morality. Either way, we aren't sure it is a positive nomination for Bush to make, as the arbiter of law in this land should not be so one-sided when it comes to major criminal issues. A past record shows that his personal beliefs have directly affected his views on crime.

Possibly the clearest cases come when he worked for Missouri, both as governor and as a senator. These cases were well outlined in the Jan. 7 Kansas City Star Sunday package. They point to Ashcroft's certainty in his belief that issues such as hate crimes and racial discrimination aren't as major as most American leaders say they are.

In 1988, it was Ashcroft, as governor, who was the only member of a 40-person panel, which included former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, that refused to sign a report finding America was moving backward in achieving equal opportunity for Blacks, Hispanics and American Indians.

Also as governor, it was Ashcroft who signed into law a Missouri hate crime bill in 1988 that gave further penalty to crimes of vandalism and assault. He would not sign any special stipulations regarding gays.

As a senator, Ashcroft co-sponsored the Civil Rights Act of 1997, which would outlaw all kinds of affirmative action. In 1998, he spoke at length in the Southern Partisan Quarterly Review of protecting the heritage of prominent Southern rebels of the Civil War such as Lee and Stonewall Jackson.

The Southern Partisan Quarterly Review is considered a neo-confederate rag that has praised the Ku Klux Klan and writes extensively of how races have dissipated the gene pool, according to the Kansas City Star.

This is just what's out there about Ashcroft now. Who knows what will surface with the senate confirmation hearings.

Conservatives snap back that Ashcroft, as attorney general, can't do anything but enforce the law the Supreme Court hands down. As Janet Reno's somewhat imperfect stint proved, however, there's more to the job than holding the line. Can anyone, without any doubt, say that Ashcroft's extreme right views won't come into play?

Of course, it seems clear that this nomination came with some pressure attached, as Ashcroft is held up as a paragon of the conservative, Christian right. Bush, who won a needed primary in South Carolina over Sen. John McCain, largely through the power of these voters, cannot abandon them without some risk. For now, he seems willing to play ball with a few of their demands.

And yet, if this is a sign of things to come, it plays directly against Bush's stated goals to usher in a new cooperation between Democrats and Republicans. In this harsh era of partisan politics, Ashcroft's nomination will polarize the beltway once again.

We oppose Ashcroft's ascendancy to the attorney general. It is no way, in Bush's words, to start the healing.

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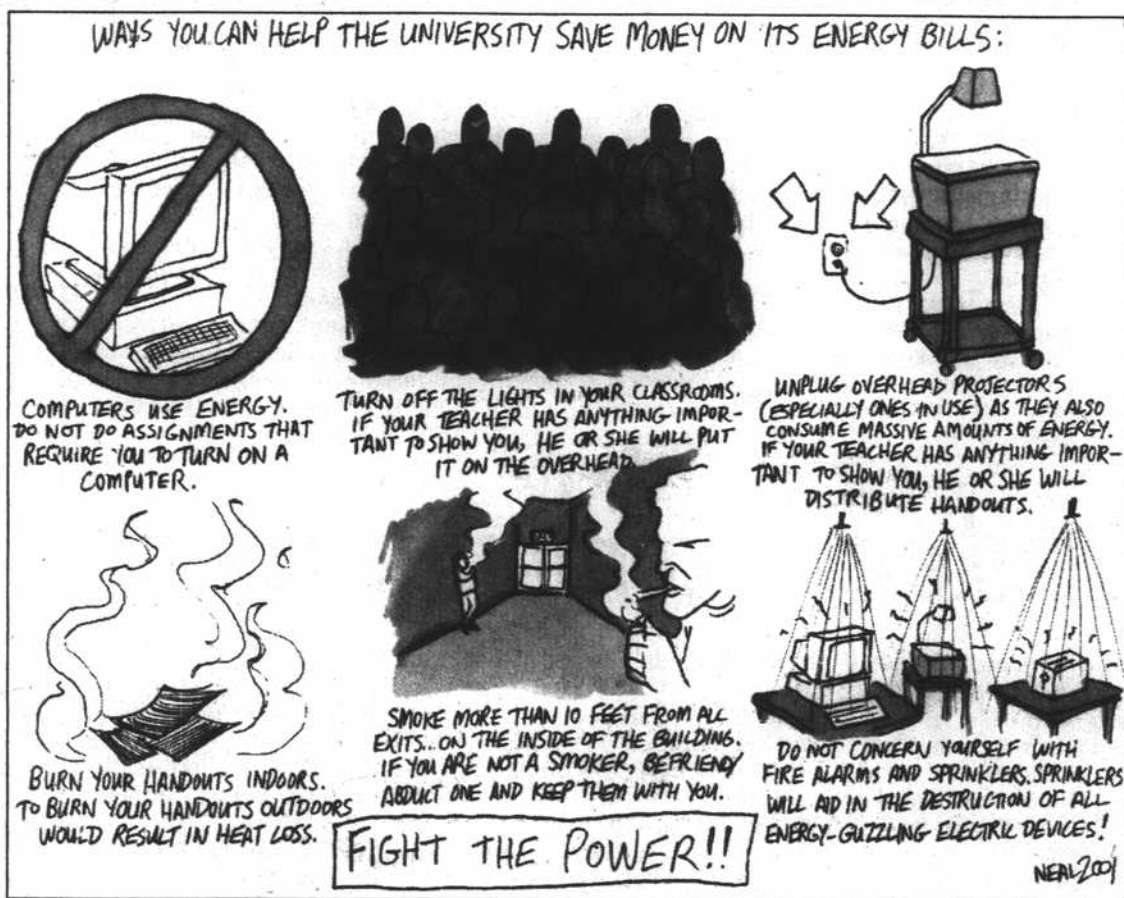
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Hunting the stealthy beast

I tell you what, this break has been fan-to-the-tastic.

Not only did I get to "cook" with my best friend Deena, I got to "chill" with her as well. Cause that's what I do baby, I cook and then I chill.

I started out the vacation in Kimball. Where? Exactly. We talked about misused clichés, what clichés mean, how to master clichés and, finally, how to make your own clichés so they become popular. My favorite thus far is "don't grip the dinosaur by the buttocks." Since I have the power to invent clichés arbitrarily, I too have no idea what this means.

Aside from contemplating the power of the cliché, I saw how people only come home for the holidays to see how much weight others have gained (thank god the cocaine kept mine off) and who has a baby.

I can't believe the people I spent my life with are now breeding. The only thing I breed is mold in my room because there is still food in there from the early '90s. The mold in no way resembles a baby, and it never wakes me up crying. In fact, it's the other way around, as the mold is so poisonous I wake up crying.

When I went to the bar where my old preschool friends were hanging out 20 years later, I kept trying to tell them about my new hobby - hunting the Purple Buffalo - while they were trying to see if I was any fatter.

I kept trying to explain "teasing" and "trapping" the elusive beast, and they kept telling me about Suzy and little Johnny's pee stories.

It was painfully obvious everyone there had traveled different lines in this here universe. Mine was to South Dakota, where the Purple Buffalo lurks and drinks champagne, and everyone else's was to the Heaven's Gate cult house to eat the ethereal



Karen Brown

applesauce of "life."

When I visit Kimball, there are two or three "hard" lessons I learn every time I go. It's not really a vacation because I still get nagged by the parental units for spilling beverages on the new carpet and yelled at for rolling my eyes at my mother, but it is a break from the Purple Buffalo and all of his buffalo shenanigans.

But that's neither here nor there. Let's get back to the "hard" lessons. Small towns, you must love them. If you don't, they will gossip about you.

"Look at that Heather; she's fat now." "But she has a PHD in molecular biology." "But she's fat."

The most astute lesson (ha!), is that nothing much changes, but my parent's home won't ever have the same feel again. Since my parents still live in the same town I spent my whole life abhorring, I am constantly searching to place old memories with old faces, and it just don't matter no more.

Hometown is no longer home.

It's nice to be home now in Lincoln and back to the normal life. Normal means having not one, but two fine ladies puke in and on your father's car and then, as you're getting your car washed in the automatic dealy-mo-bobber, the doors don't open so your car is trapped in the metal cage. After you giggle for five minutes, the gods decide to grant mercy, and they open the doors to your sweet freedom.

But no, this freedom only leads to more heartache. As you go to your apartment, you notice that your dead car has been towed from the front of your home. You spend your Christmas money getting it from the impound lot and, as no one grants mercy upon you, you realize that this is your life and this is what you must deal with.

You smile and notice that all the cops have lost weight because they've been extremely busy ticketing cars and not sitting at the donut shop (those cop/donut clichés never become trite), and as they take advantage of vacationing college students who have no place to park their cars except, well, on the street where they belong, nobody cares because it's business as usual, and it's the person's responsibility to take care of their car even when they're not around to receive the warnings, and Olivia's even worse off than me because her car doesn't work either and

Home sweet home.



Jerry Morgan/DN

Becoming a brother for others



Tony Bock

The other day, some homeless guy was pestering me for change. When I told him I had none, he muttered a holiday greeting in a very sarcastic tone.

It really hit me that I needed to make a change in my life and in how I act. The old me would have just walked away and said nothing. But I decided to start the new year off right by turning over a new leaf in my personal life.

So, I went up to him and said, "Buddy, I didn't get a PlayStation 2 this Christmas 'cause it was sold out everywhere, so don't bitch to me about crappy holidays!" Ohhhh, it felt good.

This newfound confidence has changed my attitude about many things. For instance, I realized I have to quit laughing out loud every time I hear someone refer to the man as "President George W. Bush."

I know, I know, everything is gonna be fine. Let's all just keep telling ourselves that. We had Reagan, he was the guy we all wanted to be. No matter what, he never got in any trouble. Clinton was like our horny uncle - he never got the benefit of the doubt, and he never should have, but he always got out of trouble.

W. is who we are. How'd he get through college? A steady diet of rum and coke (not the mixed drink).

How'd he get rich? Who the hell knows, and who cares? What's he going to do in a more hostile world atmosphere with an economy slowing down fast and violent crime on the rise? Start praying his ass off!

He's no different from us. We're all coasting through college, we're all rich (even the poorest Americans are rich by third-world standards), and we're all uncertain about the future.

Anytime someone stumbles into good fortune through family connections and luck, I propose we term it as "pulling a W." Say the guy on "Millionaire" gets the million-dollar question right because his dad was somehow associated with the correct answer. We shall now say he "pulled a W." Got it? Good.

And when someone gets screwed due to technicalities and questionable circumstances, we will term it as "getting Gored." Remember when Colorado got a fifth down and it cost Missouri the game? They "got Gored."

Speaking of college football, now that the season is over, I think I need to reevaluate my role as a Cornhusker fan. Now I ain't saying the Alamo Bowl wasn't a grand affair, but troubled times are on the way. I can feel it coming on like a bad mushroom trip.

The old me would have encouraged everyone not to call for Solich's head just yet. I would remind them that for a good part of his time here, Saint Osborne was not worshipped. People questioned his play-calling ability ("Up the middle again!" people would yell at the TV.) and doubted that we would ever win "the big game."

But it's the year 2001, and I'm paying good money for that football program. If we aren't winning the national championship every year, something is wrong. In the meantime, the new me wants the football staff kicked out of their posh offices as punishment for not bringing home a respectable bowl trophy.

Put the bastards in offices like the rest of the faculty have and put the department with the highest reevaluation rankings in the football offices for the semester. As for the basketball team - oh, who really gives a damn?

The new me is looking forward to a semester of academic stimulation here at the university. I'm not just going to go through the rest of the school year on auto-pilot. I'm going to take off my headphones in class, put down my Southern Comfort and Citra and actually pay attention.

In 2001, I'm not going to use my syllabus as rolling papers. I'm going to read it and attend all relevant classes and tests. OK, none of this is probably going to happen, but hopefully I'll "pull a W."